

PRESS RELEASE

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Department on Aging Announces *Senior Hall of Fame* Inductees, Presents *Governor's Unique Achievement Awards*

Seniors Honored For Service to the Community

SPRINGFIELD - October 24, 2012. The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., today presented awards to the *2012 Senior Hall of Fame* Inductees. Recipients of the *Governor's Unique Achievement Award* were also recognized during the ceremony held at the Executive Mansion in Springfield. Each year, the department hosts the ceremony to recognize older adults for the special contribution they have made.

The *Senior Hall of Fame* was created in 1994 to honor Illinoisans age 65 and older who excel in the categories of community service, education, performance/graphic arts, and the labor force, in regard to their employment. Each inductee is chosen through a statewide nomination and selection process. Since then, 87 people have been inducted into the Hall of Fame which includes this year's winners.

The *Governor's Unique Achievement Award* recognizes groups, individuals and programs that make a positive impact on the lives of seniors in the state. The awardees were nominated by Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state.

"I am pleased to introduce this year's *Senior Hall of Fame* inductees and recipients of the *Governor's Unique Achievement Award*. We salute you for accomplishments in your areas of service and thank you for working to better our communities," said Director Holton.

The 2012 Senior Hall of Fame inductees are:

James Earl Hobson, 66, of Chicago is the 2012 inductee of the Labor category. Hobson is credited for his long and difficult work to transform Garfield Park into a beautiful and safe environment on the west side of Chicago. In addition, he is well known for hosting a basketball and boxing program that benefits high school and neighborhood teams. Hobson has won many awards from Cook County, and the City of Chicago for his dedication and supervision at Garfield Park.

Antoinette Boyer Graff, 94, of Murphysboro is the 2012 inductee of the Performance/Graphic Arts category. Graff's life is filled with experiences like going to work at a shoe factory after graduating from grade school, to driving tractors and forklifts on an Army

base while her husband was stationed in New York. But at 94 she is still the leader of a senior citizen band that performs at nursing homes, churches and Illinois State Fairs. Graff also writes a column in the Murphysboro American Newspaper.

Norma Ruth Jenkins Fink, 85, of Carthage is the 2012 inductee of the Community Service category. Fink has devoted her life to giving to others. According to her nomination, if there is a cause, she will find a way to help. Carthage is a small, rural community and volunteer assistance is vital to most endeavors. Fink understands that and works to fight hunger, support the needs of the military, and help in her community including the countless volunteer hours in churches and schools.

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Edmund Kueker, 87, of Waterloo is the 2012 inductee of the Education category. Kueker, who is known as “Colonel,” is an example of living life to the fullest. He is a World War II veteran, former Monroe County farm advisor, an auctioneer, 4-H volunteer leader, a collector, tour guide, artist and an author of ten books. His books vividly detail local history, the western way of life, and horsemanship. He often says, “Kids will never know what any of this stuff is if no one saves it for them.” He began writing his eleventh book at age 85.

The 2012 Unique Achievement Awardees are:

Brad Guidi, nominated by Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging. Guidi has a passion for helping people with disabilities that originated in his own family. His younger brother died as a result of severe developmental disabilities; his grandfather spent the last 15 years of his life in a wheelchair due to a mining accident; and his daughter also faces challenges with disabilities. All inspired Guidi to buy a track of land to develop into an accessible camp and fishing site. Camp Big Sky now has a cabin, picnic areas, dock and wheelchair trails.

Network of Rural Public Transit Providers, nominated by East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging. The agency recognizes the collaborative efforts of citizen planners, local elected officials, transportation professionals, rural mass transit districts, and community transportation providers for developing and sustaining rural public transportation in all 16 counties in East Central Illinois. The network includes:

Central Illinois Public Transit

CRIS Public Transit

Dial-A-Ride

East Central Illinois Mass Transit District

Piattran

Rides Mass Transit District

SHOW BUS

Transit Reservation Information Program

Emily Dobson, leader of the Macon County Transit Partnership Group

City of Rushville Housing Committee, nominated by West Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging. Rushville started a housing committee in 2007 and partnered with Western Illinois University’s Rural Affairs Institute to assess the housing needs of the 3300 person populated city. The committee urged the city to donate land to develop a 15-unit housing complex for low income elderly. The property, made possible by a HUD grant, opened last month.

King's Daughters Organization, nominated by the Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland.

King's Daughters Organization (KDO), previously known as the International Order of King's Daughters, has a long history of service in Springfield. It was founded in 1886 as a home for aging women, until it closed in 2007. However, KDO continued its mission to help the elderly by establishing an endowment fund to make annual grants. Members also volunteer with Meals on Wheels, the American Red Cross, food pantries, and more.

Kendra Rakers of Millstadt Township, nominated by the Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois.

Rakers is a high school student who, along with her classmates, became inspired to develop a senior fitness park after seeing one during a trip to Germany. She worked with city officials and Millstadt Township Senior Services, modeled the park, and raised funds to make her vision happen. Thanks to Rakers, Millstadt's senior fitness park is doing wonders for all who use it.

Cindy Provo, nominated by the Williamson County Programs on Aging.

Provo is an outreach worker providing assistance and care for the seniors of Williamson County. She visits with hospice patients and residents in nursing homes. She assists seniors by picking up their prescriptions, doing their grocery shopping, and making sure they eat properly. She is a wonderful volunteer and advocate.

Health and Disability Advocates, nominated by AgeOptions.

Barbara Otto, CEO of Health and Disability Advocates, and her staff work on initiatives such as the Make Medicare Work Coalitions, long term care policy, and help seniors with pharmaceutical assistance. H & D provides legal assistance to people with disabilities, and advocates for cost-effective and fair healthcare and benefit programs.